

Agent Tells Of Meeting Spy Suspect D.C. Messenger Allegedly Tried To Sell Documents

By Ruth Marcus
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Randy Miles Jeffries, the District man arrested Friday night and charged with espionage, told an FBI undercover agent posing as a Soviet official that he had given the Soviets 60 "sample pages" of classified material and offered to deliver a complete package of three documents for \$5,000, an FBI agent said in court yesterday.

The agent said Jeffries, a messenger for Acme Reporting Co., a District stenographic firm that transcribes closed sessions of the House of Representatives, admitted meeting with Soviet officials on two occasions and passing them portions of the documents, including one marked "top secret."

Jeffries, 26, is charged with gathering and attempting to deliver national defense secrets to the Soviet Union.

He is the 12th person charged with espionage this year, including four Americans arrested last month on charges of spying for the Soviet Union, Israel and China. FBI spokesman Lane Bonner said there was no indication that Jeffries' arrest is connected with any of the other cases.

D.C. Superior Court Judge Reggie B. Walton ordered Jeffries, who lives at 143 Rhode Island Ave. NW, held without bond pending formal arraignment tomorrow in U.S. District Court here. Jeffries, married and the father of three, made no statement during the brief hearing.

In a statement released Friday night, the FBI said Jeffries "obtained information related to the national defense of the United States by virtue of his employment" with Acme. "After obtaining the classified documents, Jeffries at-

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tempted to deliver them" Dec. 14 to the Soviet Military Office at 2552 Belmont Rd. NW, the statement said.

A source familiar with the case said the documents were transcripts of closed hearings of the House Armed Services Committee. The source said the investigation of Jeffries began Dec. 14 when agents observed him at the Soviet Military Office.

In court yesterday, FBI agent Michael Giglia said an undercover agent posing as a Soviet representative called Jeffries at his home Friday and arranged a meeting later that day at the Holiday Inn at 14th Street and Massachusetts Avenue NW.

The agent "advised Jeffries that he had received approval from Moscow to continue dealing with Jeffries," said Giglia, who read a summary of the government's evidence against Jeffries.

Jeffries then told the agent "he had access to a bag full of top secret and secret documents which were ripped up but which could be put back together" and three other documents that were intact, Giglia said. Jeffries then "agreed to go to another location, pick up the three documents, and bring them back to the undercover agent," Giglia said.

He said Jeffries "also stated that he anticipated being able to deliver documents on a monthly basis as they became available."

An Acme official told the FBI that the company keeps copies of top secret and secret documents in its safe and disposes of them "by ripping them by hand and placing them in the trash," Giglia said.

Jeffries earned \$500 a month in his Acme job, according to court papers.

A report by the court's pretrial services division said Jeffries was convicted of possession of heroin in 1983 and had received a one-year suspended sentence. The report said Jeffries had admitted to court officials that he used heroin and cocaine.

In a statement, Acme board Chairman Charles L. Richer said Jeffries had worked as a "delivery person" at the reporting company for six weeks and that "the regular background check performed before hiring him did not turn up any problem. Among other things, the individual is a former FBI employee."

FBI spokesman Bonner said Jeffries worked for the FBI as a "support employee" from 1978 to 1980 in the agency's identification division. Bonner said he had no information that Jeffries' departure was anything "other than a voluntary resignation."

Like all other FBI employees, Jeffries had an agency security clearance, Bonner said.

Teri Benson, Acme's vice president, told the Associated Press that Acme was not aware of Jeffries' drug conviction, saying, "We did run a police check with the D.C. police on Nov. 8, 1985, which came back showing no record."

The government's court papers did not specify what work Acme did for Congress, other than to state that "part of Acme's services includes reporting of closed sessions of the House of Representatives, in which classified information relating to the national defense is provided to the Congress."

G. Kim Wincup, staff director of the House Armed Services Committee, said Acme had done work for the committee in the past, but he was not certain if the firm still does so.

Thomas Ladd, assistant to the clerk of the House, who is responsible for arranging transcription of House sessions and hearings, said, "We try to do most of the classified hearings with our in-house reporters just because of this problem. We feel we have better control over our own employees than someone else's."

However, he said, if there is not a reporter available on the House staff who has a security clearance to cover a closed hearing, an outside reporting firm may be called in. The outside reporters must hold security clearances, Ladd said. He said all materials from the hearings, classified and public, are supposed to be returned to Congress.

Ladd said he was not familiar with exactly what work Acme did for the House.